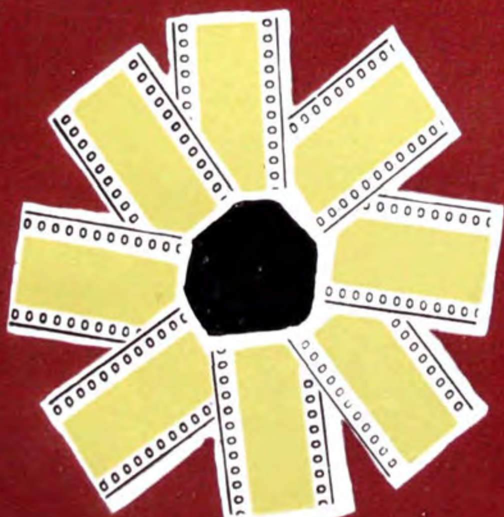
FILMS FOR CHILDREN





Edited by
J P DAS



Children's Film Society, India

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Edited by
DR J. P. DAS

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This publication is the outcome of the Seminar held during the International Children's Film Festival at Bhubaneswar during November 14-23, 1987. The articles contained herein were circulated among the participants of the Seminar and discussed at length.

It is hoped that the points made in these papers and the discussions thereon will help the cause of children's film movement and pave the way for better films for children.

J.P. Das

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November 14 to 23, 1987

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EDUCATIONAL VALUES OF CHILDREN'S FILMS

Dr Jagannath Mohanty

Dr S. Radhakrishnan, the former President of India, very aptly observed, "Though the Five-year Plans are important for the welfare of the nation, yet much more than changes in the environment is the need to change the nature of human beings. The transformation of the man is more essential than the transformation of the environment. If we do not change the minds and hearts of people, we cannot change anything else, and to bring about a change in minds and hearts, there are many media, but the most potent of them is the film itself, specially a film produced for children".[1] The film is one of the best media of communication as it provides motion, realism and variety. It enables the child to imagine the distant and past world, gives new knowledge about the unknown and inaccessible places and people, influences his attitude and assists in developing appreciations about various objects, persons and places.

During the past few years we have given great importance to the use of television, particularly in the field of education and underestimated the educational significance of films. But television and film supplement each other and one is not easily distinguished from the other in an electronic photographic system. Of course, most television programmes are made on films and films make up many of television's most exciting presentations. Television and films have much in common as they make use of both light and sound. Many ideas and principles of

planning, production, utilisation as well as evaluation apply to both films and television.

An essential difference remains: films lack the immediacy of live telecast, as a result of which a film must leave out something of the original reality. On account of this, we may say that films are to some extent more abstract than television. The abstract, however, does not mean "difficult" or "dull" rather "live" telecast sometimes are "confused and boring". "The editing of reality", it has been rightly pointed out by Edgare Dale "can reconstruct and sharpen the event, sometimes making the film more real than the reality itself".[2] The film is also an expensive medium and has little more complications in use than television. But the audience have some control over the viewing of films as they can "slow" or "back" the process of operation for having a second look and minutely observing any particular scene or process.

Educational films are produced primarily for realising some instructional objectives. They are distinguished from "feature films" which are usually made for entertainment. It is, however, seen that many feature films have immense educational importance as they can enhance knowledge and change attitudes. In the educational films pupils see and hear recorded experiences, imaginative stories and dramas and recreated scenes and episodes of the past. The educational film is one of a few communication media which have so much of versatility — combination of motion, words, colour and music. It is capable of bringing the "world into classrooms".

In the past the film has served mainly as a medium of presenting facts, but it is being used more and more for enabling pupils to develop those insights, skills and understandings which will be useful for assuming their suitable roles in the society. It is considered by some

teachers as a supplementary device, but now it is more than that — it is a fundamental material for education. In USA it is estimated that 90 per cent of the high schools use films in teaching. It is now widely used, critically studied and scientifically evaluated for further improvement. Educational films are not entertainment films from Hollywood as claimed by some critics. They are specially scripted and produced films, carefully authenticated by educators.

James S. Kinder has lucidly mentioned "Pupils are as different as the homes from which they come. In nearly every group some will have had wide opportunities to travel, read good books or engage in hobbies, other will have had few of these opportunities. The motion picture is an excellent medium for providing a common experience background for the class. Reading, discussion, construction and other activities of the class will be more meaningful. When a pupil feels on a par with his class-mates, he reacts more favourably to the process of instruction and contributes voluntarily to group activities. Although the Film is essentially a vicarious experiencing, the child has a feeling of real participation. Through identification of himself with the characters in the film, he sees his own problems more clearly".[3] Films also help provide better instruction for classes which have uneven intellectual abilities. Even the slow-learners profit from films to some extent.

Educational films have been classified by some experts under three main categories: (i) *Instructional fiims* (ii) *Documentary films*, (iii) *Newsreels*. The first category consists of the films that are useful for learning specific topics in the classroom. The topics may be related to any subject under the sun. But mostly these subjects are provided in the curricula e.g. mathematics, science, language, social science, art, craft and so on.

The Documentary films are all motion pictures that mean to teach (from Latin 'docere'). According to the World Union of Documentary in 1947, "By the documentary film is meant all methods of recording on celluloid any aspect of reality, interpreted either by factual shooting or by sincere and justifiable reconstruction, so as to appeal either to reason or to emotion for the purpose of stimulating the desire for, and the widening of human knowledge and understanding and of truthfully posing the problems and their solutions in the spheres of economics, culture and human relations".[4] The documentary film conveys information and forms attitudes by dramatising actual material. It communicates its message in terms of human beings and human interests.

John Grierson, the British film expert has rightly defined the documentary as "a creative treatment of actuality". Although it aims at a truthful representation of a theme or an incident it cannot be true for various reasons. Technical difficulties often stand in the way of truthful representation. The characters of the documentary films are generally the people in real life-situations. But occasionally persons become camera-shy and fail to act in a natural manner. That is why, some professional actors are taken in the film. The documentary films are instructive as well as interesting covering a large range of subjects.

Newsreels can play an important role in education as they deal with current events both in India and abroad. The newsreel has very little in common with the characteristics of a documentary except that both of them deal with natural material. It presents in simple, descriptive and matter-of-fact manner the events of the day without any colouring or bias. As pointed out by S.K. Chakrabarti, "One great difficulty in using newsreels is that they are generally produced in 35mm. It is hoped,

however, that in future 16 mm newsreels will be produced for circulation to educational institutions. It is also hoped that these reels will reach educational institutions as quickly as they reach cinema houses."[5]

The films for children are not strictly brought under the educational film. But they have a very significant place in education as they play an important role in the development of personality of the child. It has been succinctly said by Chakrabarti, "The future of a nation depends on how the children are nourished and fed with healthy ideas during the most formative period of their lives. The views that the human being is a finished product in his fourth or fifth year is no doubt an exaggeration, but it is certainly true that childhood is a time of the greatest susceptibility to influence and environmental conditions."[6]

Children's films are mostly feature films which aim at entertainment but can promote instruction. The themes of these films can be tied in with curricula under certain unit of study. Learning is, therefore, a by-product in this case as the children's films do educate, do influence and motivate. Carl Sandburg, an American poet of great distinction once said, "I meet people occasionally who think that motion pictures, the product that Hollywood makes, is merely entertainment, has nothing to do with education. That's one of darndest fool fallacies that is current. . . . Anything that brings you to tears by way of drama does something to the deepest roots of our personality. All movies good or bad are educational and Hollywood is the foremost educational institution on earth. What! Hollywood more important than Harvard? The answer is, not as clean as Harvard, but nevertheless farther reaching."[7]

It goes without saying that entertainment films have important educational effects as an essential part of a

student's world and they can change attitudes, increase knowledge and modify behaviour. But it is also criticised that these films adversely affect the children's growth. Attempts have been made in the developed countries like USA, and UK to find out the extent of such baneful effects. The research findings have shown that the undesirable influences of such films, particularly commercial ones, relating to sex and crimes have been exerted on children, even grown-ups whose background is not sufficiently strong are likely to be affected by the scenes. A committee on children and the cinema appointed in the UK, pointed out, "A large number of films are exposing children regularly to the suggestion that the highest values in life are riches, power, luxury, public education and it does not matter very much how these are attained or used. . . . We are convinced that the regular portrayal of false values is more perversive and dangerous than the depiction of the crime or impropriety."[8]

Films for children must be specially produced and should not be confused with instructional films. The main objective of children's films is to provide healthy entertainment and through that improvement of their minds and personalities. Direct instruction or didacticism has no good impact on children. To suggest good values of life through stories, poems and dramas must have a better effect on children's minds. That is why, Panchatantram or Hitopadesh stories have more instructional values than anything else and films depicting such stories can have better educational implications. Similarly, the patriotic stories of our Freedom struggle will have immense potentiality for children's films which must be interesting as well as instructive.

Films on fairy tales can influence the development of children's imagination to a great extent. But we should

ensure that they do not contradict the limits of reality thereby giving a false picture of the world. Likewise adventure films, geographical films and so on develop certain good qualities in children besides giving enjoyment. Commenting on some films produced by the children's Film Society at Delhi, Father Pire, Nobel Prize Winner for peace aptly observed, "But in the world which has suddenly become so small there remains so much prejudice and so many gulfs which divide mankind. Your films for children should not only acquaint them with world geography, but above all, with human beings. Knowing each other better will mean reduction of prejudice, gulfs, tensions, and it would also be likely to arouse an increased interest in the other with reciprocal sincere friendship.'[9]

The films for children should be aesthetically pleasurable and artistically attractive. Children are drawn first to the film by the movement and music than by theme and plot. It has to be realized, therefore, that latest techniques and equipment should be utilised in the production of children's films. The proverb goes, "Examples are better than precepts" and films give the instances without much solemnisation. The great ideals depicted in the books do not become "functioning realities." But they are required to be assimilated by children through living examples. Dr Radhakrishnan, therefore, pointed out "if you want to make the young people get some ideals of human dignity, human rights, the need for truthfulness, for integrity, it is not by asking them to be truthful or to love their neighbours but it is by presenting to them concrete examples of truthfulness and integrity by means of the films themselves."

Besides elder children, young children possess different psychological needs and conditions. Young children prefer more colour and movement to black and white as well as

static or slow-moving films. They do not care to understand the story or higher values. The animal stories, puppet shows and cartoons specially animated, sweet and simple music, usually rhythmic, are liked by young children most. Further, these films should not be longer than fifteen or twenty-minutes which is the normal span of their attention.

Summarising the educational values of children's films, it may be stated as follows. The films for children can —

1. Bring the distant past and the present into class-rooms.
2. Bring the distant places, objects and living beings closer to children.
3. Recreate reality and reveal the invisible.
4. Develop and influence attitudes favourably.
5. Promote better human relationship and international understanding.
6. Provide a satisfying aesthetic experience.
7. Compel attention through motion, music and colour.
8. Make the presentation of a story or a poem a living reality through interesting plots and characters which are identified by children.
9. Help overcoming the intellectual or experience barriers to learning.
10. Motivate learning and create good aesthetic interests.

The educational values of a children's film can be adequately realised with its proper and effective utilisation only. Otherwise, the best films might have least effects on children. There are, of course, various ways to use films for children. Films should be suitable to the particular age-group and must cater to their needs and conditions. They must be previewed first by the teachers and others

who are interested in and conscious of the values of films for children. The salient features and learning points should be noted down and be told to children as introduction in order to motivate them and to ensure easy reception. Similar actions need be taken even during and just after screening the film for explaining and reinforcing certain points of interest and importance to children.

Children's films can have better impact when they are correlated with other curriculum materials. James S. Kinder has, therefore, advised, "In general, the formula may be stated as the THE RIGHT FILM IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME USED IN THE RIGHT WAY. These 4 R's are the basic principles of all good utilisation".[10] These principles mean and warrant proper selection, favourable environment, suitable psychological time and proper manner of utilization. In the absence of any of these principles in action and operation, the effects of children's films would proportionately be diminished.

Children are quite sensitive, but they have to be adequately "warmed up" to required sensitization. They are a captive audience no doubt but their interest and attention are not captive. Taking care of these points will pay good dividends. It has to be realized that the best of the films are of little value, unless properly utilized. Adequate research and feed-back should also go along with planning, production and utilization of children's films for ensuring better results. Children's active participation and interaction in all these processes will have better salutary effects.

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THE STORY ELEMENT IN FILMS FOR CHILDREN

Manorama Jafa

About 700 feature films for adults are produced in India every year. But, only about seven children's films are made. Film making for children, therefore continues to be in a growing stage despite the efforts of the Children's Film Society over the last 32 years. The quality of children's films is also nothing much to talk about.

Two years ago, Children's Film Society organized a Seminar on Children's Films, which can be considered to be a land-mark event. It provided an opportunity for discussion and debate. The Seminar also gave an opportunity for stock taking. It came out clearly that a good children's film is one which the children would like to see again and again.

In the last film festival held at Bangalore in 1985, a child invitee expressed his views:

"Before I go into details, I want the adult audience to accept that children of the modern days are not senseless, absurd or foolish. Faced with tough times ahead, the modern generation is turning out to be a highly competent and intelligent lot. They are able to interpret life in their own innocent manner, definitely not with the shrewdness of adults."

"Most film makers seem to be under a wrong notion. They feel that the only way to entertain children is to make childish films. According to their vocabulary childish obviously includes ridiculous and highly insane

ideas which even a toddler of the present generation would refuse to accept" (V Prashant — a seventeen-year old student).

Present-day children expect more than the old sentimental sweetness, the old superheroes, the old exploits of middle and upper class children solving crimes and accomplishing deeds beyond the courage and capacity of grown-ups. They like to see in their films, the real life stories about people and situations which are relevant to them.

A good children's film, no doubt needs a good direction, high degree of skill, together with good camera work. More than this, it also needs a powerful story. The common experience is that Indian film makers are generally unable to give adequate attention to this aspect.

The film makers in India often write stories themselves without realising that writing a story for children is a special art. Any one who attempts a story for a children's film has to have this special skill. For selecting a story for children's film, the film maker must either know the special requirements or obtain consultation from the people who have specialised in this field. Here are some of the special features the film makers should bear in mind.

— Children like to be entertained first.
  Children see the film for pleasure only if they enjoy seeing it, they will see it from beginning to the end.
— Children like their stories to grow straight.
  Flash backs do not appeal to them. The straight growth of story does not force children to apply their mind to the flash back, which is a left over forgotten time for a child.
— Children are not nostalgic.

The 'present' enchants them and has a meaning for them. They live in the world of the present. They do not think of the past nor are they worried about the future. The past and future only matters to children once they have crossed childhood. Because they live in the present, stories written for their films should have the urgent quality of something happening now:

— Children are impatient.
— They like their stories to begin immediately. They also like their stories to grow fast. A slow pace and unnecessary details and lengthy songs tire them. For the same reason, children do not like too much information to be stuffed into a story.
— Children love action.

A story for their film must be dramatic and quick paced.

— Children love crisp dialogues.

It is important that dialogues should sound natural and appropriate to the characters who are speaking them. The story should also grow with the dialogue.

— Children love suspense and novelty. Hackneyed plots tire children. An element of anticipation with some hope or fear lurking in the background is more attractive to them than an unexpected surprise.
— Children like to see a child play the lead role.

It is easy for children to identify with child characters. They don't mind having adult characters in their film but they certainly prefer a child of their age or little older

playing the main role. They appreciate stories in which childhood has a certain dignity.

— Children like to see themselves growing.
— Children like to receive a message.

But they dislike sermons. They like positive attitude in their stories and they naturally identify with the angels, not with the devils.

— Children prefer down to earth stories with emotional appeal.
— Children appreciate good presentation and a satisfying end.

In the history of mankind, noble ideas have gained ground gradually. Distinction between good and evil have undergone changes as our values have developed over the years. However, certain universal values such as love, honesty and truth have always been regarded superior to individual gains. It is the responsibility of film makers to make young viewers understand the absolute and profound relationship between happiness and love. Through the film stories, the children must come to feel that they will be happier human beings when they love than when they hate, when they help than when they hurt. The children's story writers must avoid the anti-hero qualities in the main characters of their stories. They must help children to develop self confidence and faith in themselves and love for others by portraying child characters who have these qualities.

All successful film makers make films for the pleasure of their audience but as a children's film maker, they have to think about the story carefully. Children are little adults in making and story writers as well as film makers

are expected to entertain the young audience and guide them to become good citizens of tomorrow. An honest simple film with a powerful story could become the best entertainment and children would also recommend it to their friends and view it again.

The film makers should not select such stories which might offend the sensibility of parents and traditions. Fo example, sex and any perverse behaviour is almost a taboo.

The purpose of the film maker is to entertain young audience whenever there are strong differences of opinion on an issue and general public is divided, it would be discreet to avoid such controversies completely. A film maker is not a propagandist. He would certainly like to seek wider audience and would be well advised to keep off such issues.

The villain in the story should not belong to professions which are well regarded by society — teaching, medicine, law and police. If for any reason the story writer does it, he must try to do it inoffensively. He should only use the character as an individual, not as a representative of his profession.

The story writer must also avoid slighting mother, father, or a teacher, who are regarded as respectable by children. Children do not appreciate any one mocking at their elders in real life and the same rule will apply in their films also. Mocking at a disabled person is also not well regarded.

The hero of the story should have predominantly good qualities. Though like any other normal human being he would also have some weak characteristics too. Select hero belonging to our own country. It is easier for a writer and the film maker to characterise him or her and also enables the viewers to easily identify with him or her.

An anti-hero winning the battle at the end of the story

is totally unacceptable. It is expected that the villain will eventually be punished and defeated. To provide a satisfying end to a story the script writer must follow the tradition that good prevails over evil. The Ramayan story is still the most popular story with young and old both and that is a good example of a satisfying story. The film maker must remember that too much suffering and the details of suffering take away the charm of a good children's film. The young viewer looks for entertainment.

Cruelty and torture, whether physical or mental, should be avoided completely.

Children do not also like accidental happening coincidence. They also dislike open sermons. They hate seeing children behaving like adults and adults behaving like children. All the story characters must therefore behave in a natural way.

The real secret of a good and powerful story for a children's film lies not merely in its being less dry and less difficult, but more rich in interest, either true to nature or fantasy, more exquisite in art, more abundant in quality that responds to child viewer's keener and fresher perceptions.

It is time that the film makers realise that a good story is as much important as any other aspect of making good children's film. They could perhaps call upon the children's writers to provide powerful stories with interesting plots and with good childhood appeal.

CHILDREN AND CHILDREN'S FILMS

N. V. K. Murthy

Some time ago, at a conference of educationists, I dropped a brick when I suggested that education was too important to be left to educationists alone. I think, I should repeat the indiscretion and now say that children's films are too important to be left to film experts alone.

My purpose in doing so, as on the earlier occasion, is to focus attention on the scant notice taken of by society in general in respect of this very important component of child development.

Come Nehru's birthday, all of us suddenly seem to remember how important the child is in society. Prominent persons deliver impressive speeches mouthing platitudes like "child is the father of the man". Then we feel we have done our duty and have nothing more to do till November 14 next year. When some people try to follow it up with a few meaningful steps, innumerable hurdles are placed in their way, usually in the shape of vested interest groups. These hurdles are then found to be too difficult to surmount. Worse still, the foolish reformers are warned that sacred tenets of freedom etc., are involved and so wisdom lies in letting sleeping dogs lie.

No one will disagree that India is woefully lacking in the matter of children's films. Much smaller countries have made remarkably good films for their young citizens. We, in spite of the Children's Film Society, which was set up some three decades ago amidst much fanfare and more hope, have not been able to make any significant change in the situation. At least we now have an International

Children's Film Festival once every two years. The children in some lucky city, chosen as venue of the festival, will get to see excellent films from all over the world. If anything, it will help to underscore the deficiency in our own country.

What is holding us back? Sometime ago, it was thought lack of production facilities was the chief impediment. Funds, however limited, were placed, at the disposal of the Children's Film Society for this purpose. Some good films did, indeed, get made. Soon, it was taken over by veterans. Young talent, fresh ideas and humour which naturally come to the child, were scoffed at. Too much value was put on experience. Old conservative ideas ruled the field. The result was not entirely happy.

The trouble with us older people is that we can never get over our "good old days" syndrome. This inevitably leads to a generation gap. We should not forget that each generation has to face its own challenges and find its own solutions. The solutions that we found to all problems, however progressive or even revolutionary they may have seemed to us at the time, may be old hat to the younger generation. So, nothing would be more unthinking and more counter-productive than to refuse to see this very legitimate need of the children to find their own solutions. Experience certainly helps. But this should be offered in the spirit that can help them to draw their own conclusions and not to impose solutions.

Unfortunately, the whole focus of education has got choked in the straight-jacket of formal education. Instead of helping a young mind to develop, our own prejudices, our own biases. wittingly or unwittingly, contribute to their developing closed minds. The ideal thing would be to thoroughly revamp our educational set-up in order to achieve the objective of opening up young minds instead of closing them.

However, meanwhile, non-formal education can play a very important role in overcoming this hurdle. If a good children's film is not part of the non-formal education effort, I do not know what it is or what purpose it can serve. The firm belief held by the formal school teacher that education is a bitter medicine which must be forced down the throat of the child for its own good, seems to animate most children's film-makers with aged minds. I am advisedly using the phrase 'aged minds' because an aged body need not necessarily house an aged mind and vice versa!

To make matters worse, financial viability was the new mantra enunciated by the Central Government and ably chanted by the pundits of the Finance Ministry. Every corporation and organisation of the Government was urged to raise its own resources and become a commercially viable unit. In the event, a similar organisation, the Film Finance Corporation, and its later *avatar*, the National Film Development Corporation, all but became a Film Commercial Corporation. But it fortunately resisted some way along the line, and has come to contribute significantly to good cinema in the country.

Likewise, the Children's Film Society concentrated on balancing its budget. The result was that worthy development programmes had to be shelved or postponed. Also, in a bid to make children's films commercially viable, the pulling power of the omni-present escapist' box office films for adults, seems to have got rubbed off on the children's films too. This line of thinking was ably advocated by the established box office film people. They saw in it a laudable realistic approach. The trouble with this approach is that if followed to its logical conclusion, one might end up arguing in favour of the State going back to its traditional role of collecting revenue and protecting the country from aggression from without and turmoil from

within, leaving all other activities to 'commercially viable units.' Let us hope such a sad day will not be allowed to come.

While it is easy to bemoan the lack of official financial support for the production of good children's films, let us do a more ticklish job of taking a fair and objective look at the cinema scene in the country, not only in the field of production, but in the fields of distribution and exhibition.

As is well known, there is an inevitable tie-up between people in the three fields of production, distribution and exhibition of films. As long as there are no outlets of the state or those controlled by trusts, public or private, dedicated to the good of society, merely getting good films financed and made will not carry us very far.

In some other countries, theatres willingly show or are required to do so, either by trade bodies or by the state, children's films on fixed days of the week, usually one or two. In this country, though we have four or five regular shows every day and some more on holidays in commercial cinema houses, there is no compulsion to show a children's film even once a fortnight. Several State Governments have, at the bidding of the local language film lobbies, framed rules which require them to devote a certain number of minimum shows, to films in the language of that State or region. If this is not objectionable, then one cannot understand what holds back a similar rule requiring the cinema houses to devote at least one show every week to children's films. One can only explain this in terms of the antipathy of the film industry and the apathy of the State. The sooner the situation is rectified, the better it will be for the children's film movement. The Government of Karnataka has a reputation of wanting to usher in many progressive reforms. If it could be persuaded to do this during the current International

Children's Film Festival, it would be a significant step forward.

Another wonderful avenue that is open for this good purpose is, of course, the omnipotent and omnipresent Doordarshan. But alas, it has taken upon itself the burden of collecting revenue for the Central Government, thereby missing its essential purpose of information, education and dissemination of culture. The sooner they wake up to their basic responsibility to society and cut down on the money-spinning sponsored programmes and show meaningful non-formal educational programmes, which can be extremely entertaining, the better it would be.

CHILDREN'S FILMS OR ADULT'S FILMS FOR CHILDREN

Dr M.S. Thimmappa

I have seen several Indian films labelled as children's films in the last four decades. Such films are, of course, given tax exemptions with facilities for block reservation by schools and other institutions to attract children, for, presumably, these are good for them or at least children enjoy them. Generally, a children's film conjures up the image of animals and their adventures, cartoons, adventures of children — often impossible ones — fun and frolic, fantasy and morals. Quite a lot of these elements are thrown into the film probably on the assumption that the children either identify best with those elements or that their mental development is such that the adult's problems and issues of life have no meaning for children. How far are these assumptions justified?

True, the children like and respond easily to motility, expressive action and demonstrativeness; they seek immediate and clear-cut solutions, they have greater intolerance for uncertainty, ambiguity and delayed — albeit long lasting — solution. It is for these reasons that they are also easily sustained by hopes and myths. Yet. these qualities cannot be a licence for the extent of unreality and fantasy found in so called children's films. Such films are not for children, they are at best what the adults think children want or should have and not what they need and seek. The film is not based on the phenomenology of the child, as it should be. Instead, it dwells on the "child in

an adult" myth of the society. In the bargain, the child suffers and thereby misses the wonderful opportunity of enjoyment, self-discovery, self-development and growth which are indeed possible, like in any other creative activity, if only the children's film discovers its potentialities of becoming a film of and for the child.

The impact of immature and unrealistic films on the child, especially in his growing and formative years can indeed be devastating. The preoccupation of the Indian mind with myths and folklore has rubbed off on the films we make, including those for kids, where too we try to preach.

There are people who believe children do not know what they are, what they want and what they should become. The child has limited experience and repertoire of information, they contend and it is the duty of the adult to guide and direct the child.

Help, yes. Telling the child what he should be or even what is the best thing to be, no. To the extent that the adult's direction takes care of discovering what the child is, it is of value. So it is in the film. The child is both susceptible and suggestible. It is unethical to dump adult images of life about the child even before the child gets *his* images of life. If we throw the crap of fantasy and crude and underdeveloped images of life, the child gobbles up whatever we have given and makes it his own. That would deprive the child of authentic experience. In that sense, a stupid adult film for adults is far less dangerous than a stupid adult's film for children. The adult's experience and reasoning ability can see through safely the unrealism and other negative influences of the film. But the child is vulnerable. A film maker should weigh these ethical factors before embarking on a film for children. Otherwise, the film either fails to take into account the child's world or takes for granted that the child s

world is childish. Truth, apart from the child's dignity, is at stake and often both are a casualty in the so called children's film.

Why don't we sit, talk and share with the child, study him before we make a film for him? Perhaps then we may realise that their likes and dislikes are not always what we thought them to be, and that their interests go beyond cartoon films, animals and adventures to the maturity one expects in an adult. Organisations like the Children's Film Society have thus a great role to play in creating films that are meaningful to children. There could be 'interacting forums' of children from different cultures and regions (in which film-makers could even participate). Such encounters eventually help children to freely exchange ideas and experiences, their concept of their world and what they seek in it, which would be of immense value to makers of children's films. Maybe, one day, those children would write scripts and even direct films, films by the children, for the children but which are not unrealistic or childish.

After all what is a film? It has all the elements of a creative art and there are films which have achieved the heights of creative expression. The urge for creative expression comes primarily from the realisation that life is far richer than what a routine day-to-day nexus to life permits us to comprehend; often language fails in approximating the depth and breadth of life. Hence creative expression employs other ploys such as symbols and images, imagination and concoction of non-ordinary situations to enable us to comprehend the reality as it is. Eventually, such a discovery opens up fresh communication with our beings and the world, brings forth new experiences. Thus, discovering truth and standing by it always gives greater competence in and surer grip on life.

There is no reason why such a relationship between art

and life should be missing in a film. Again, there are films which have attained the creative level with whatever the matrix of communication they may have employed: maybe as an entertainment or a sharing of a new point of view on life, or even a comprehensive catalogue of life-events (which the ordinary consciousness misses). But the tragedy is that such heights have been attained mostly in adult films and very rarely in children's films, because here the adult tries to "come down" to the "level" of the child instead of honestly interacting with him on his own terms.

Let us not assume the role of a godfather, but that of a co-author or co-relator with the child. Let the child's struggles, his accomplishments, his pride, form the ethics of a children's film. It is imperative then that the film-maker should establish a communication, a dialogue, with the child as an independent being in his own right before venturing on making a children's film. Then the film is bound to be meaningful not only to the child but also to the adult. For, whether child or adult, the reality out (or in) there is indivisible and our (child and adult) experience of the reality is as real as the others. The sooner we realise that the adult has no exclusive rights on reality and that the child has an equal and independent claim on his reality, the better it is for the children's film!

CHARACTERISATION IN CHILDREN'S FILMS

Surekha Panandiker

Written words are permanent. There is no substitute for written words. But visual media has greater impact especially on children. Therefore, dramas, plays, films and TV programmes can keep the children glued to their seats.

Children world over know Walt Disney more than any other figure because he produced best films for them. Films have tremendous potential not only of entertaining but also for educating and inculcating good values among children. In the Western world and in USSR this media of films is widely exploited for these purposes by producing beautiful films for children. But unfortunately Indian children films do not attract our children even when TV has brought them within their homes.

Why don't our children watch films made for them? The basic reason is that Indian children films are not made interesting enough to catch the fancy of our children. It is not that we do not have good basic stories. Our mythology, folklore, history is a vast source of story materials. We also have many talented writers who are writing for children. Their original stories can be made into good children films.

But good story is not enough. The manner in which the story is presented can make or unmake the film. And by presentation I do not mean the technical aspect like photography, sound recording, editing, etc. All these technical details are important no doubt but more than

these, the characterisation and situations which develop the basic story into an absorbing children film need to be given special attention. These very aspects are often neglected. The result is drab children films. There are exceptions like Bal Shivaji and Dakghar Naria. In these films not only the centre character but also the other characters and situations are so well developed that they sustain the interest of children. Therefore, these films are always shown to full houses.

The characters and situations must be carefully chosen and developed to reach the climax and then satisfying end. Characters give life to a story. They have to be realistic and convincing. Many times children forget the story or plot but they remember the well sketched character of the film like Oliver Twist, David Copperfield, Donald and Micky, Shivaji, Chetak, etc.

The characters in children films need to have distinct characteristics. But they should behave like normal persons with whom children can relate and identify. Characters in children films should be taken from life with which children are familiar like family members and relatives, friends and teachers. People with whom they come into contact, i.e., postman, milkman, vegetable vendor, balloonwala etc. Animals and pets, trees and flowers.

A special care is needed to give them physical characteristics. These characters should have different and distinct temperament which enable them to react to each other as well as face different situations in natural way, i.e., a mother should dress, look, behave and talk like a normal mother, who every child knows. She can scold, she can get angry. She can ask a child character to do work like a normal mother does. She should not be goody goody all the time or crying and submissive, or harsh and demanding, preaching and sermonising.

A comic character has to be amusing and not vulgar. Generally humour is lacking in our children's films. And if at all there is a humour, it is contrived based on physical attributes rather than situation and character oriented. Often a comic character whether it is grown up or child is shown as a dumb person with no intelligence. In other words humour takes the form of ridicule. And in children's film negative attributes of any character must be avoided. Because they go against basic human values like respect for elders and teachers, love and compassion for fellow beings and animals. But in enthusiasm of making children laugh half naked adult or shabbily dressed teacher is shown snoring with his mouth open and tummy blowing like balloon or again a fatty elderly lady is made to walk like an elephant or policeman is depicted as a fool who can be duped even by small children.

These kinds of characterisation go against our cultural ethos and social values. Instead humour can be brought about by absent mindedness or forgetfulness of a person, i.e., absent-minded father putting salt instead of sugar in the tea. By mannerism and way of talking like habit of repeating the phrases, etc. These kinds of humorous characteristics add charm to the characters of the film and create pleasant feeling in children.

Coming to anti hero or villain we find that violence and abuses have become the mainstay of their characterisation. Use of violence and cruelty on the verge of morbidity by any character in the children's film not only frightens but also destroys finer feelings of love and compassion in a child. But still our films mould their anti heroes all black and heroes all white. Reality is never all black or all white. There are shades of grey. This grey reality should be shown while characterising different people in children's films. Exaggeration does not help to build up a character.

Hero, villain or anti hero are well developed characters in our children films. But other characters which revolve them are neglected. If these side characters too are well defined and clear they highlight the hero and add strength to main characters. But what happens in our children films is that a side character is introduced in early stage and then the director in idolising hero forgets about that character. The child watching the film feels confused and loses interest in the film.

Therefore, it is necessary to envisage all the characters in the beginning and then shape them in such a way that with their development, the hero and the story shape in a logical and systematic way.

To give authenticity to the characters in children's films, language of the dialogues should match the age, physical characterisation and temperament of that character. The language plays an important part in distinguishing different characters. A villager cannot speak sophisticated urban language. Local dialect will add colour to his character. Fun on words, or double meaning words lead to confusion, especially in younger children's mind. The language should be spoken language and not bookish.

In our children's films very scant attention is given to this fact. Most of our child characters sound precocious. They speak literary or very school teacher like language. It makes child characters uppish or unrealistic. The viewers certainly don't like to see their counterparts acting snobbish. Dialogues should not be spoken in theatrical manner by the characters in children's films. They should sound natural. Children do understand the difference between natural and put on act or dialogue. And they shirk away from artificiality.

Similarly grown up characters in our children films are

made to talk in a preaching tone. No child likes to be talked down.

In case of animal characters in the film care has to be taken to see that the animals do not overshadow the human characters. This is what happens in many of our children's films. A dog, an elephant or any other pet should be used to supplement the hero. Animals should help the hero. They should not become hero, unless it is the main character around which the story is evolved, that is unless it is an animal story.

In case of animation films too, the characterisation of different animals has to be realistic. Their behaviour should match their known temperament and physical attributes. The best example of animal characters are provided by that master film maker Walt Disney in his "Jungle Book" and other animation films. Our Panchatantra stories have immense scope for the purpose. But then the directoı should have the thorough knowledge of animals and their behaviour. One cannot make elephant jump from one place to another, but it can certainly dance to the rythm. A serious or contemplating monkey cannot be envisaged even in wildest dream or a fantasy.

Thus characterisation in any children film be it a fantasy, animation or realistic and historic, has to be true to like and within the known range of child's environment and comprehension.

With proper characterisation and use of proper images and language even a dry subject like computer can be made into an interesting film, i.e., an intriguing subject like economics can become absorbing and simple as is done in "Economics Made Easy".

Along with physical attributes, suitable dress and language, credible temperament, the situations in which different characters are placed and react help not only in developing characters but also makes the film interesting.

Just as the character have to be known or from real life, situations too must be credible. Children should be able to believe that situations shown in the film can be encountered by them too. Modern children with their exposure to lot of information and facts cannot be taken for a ride. Even in fantasy or science fiction films they can immediately detect the unrealistic situation.

In creating a credible situation care has to be taken about the geography of the place, culture of the country and social ethos in which our children are growing up. Many times w·: find in our enthusiasm to depict modernity we copy the situations from foreign films and then the characters reactions to them become unrealistic. In many a so called adventure story films Indian children are placed in alien situations, i.e., Do our children go on camping on their own without an escort? Or, do we allow our children as much freedom as is shown in our children's films? How many parents allow children to pay the fees of their needy friend out of their pocket money? Pocket money itself is an alien concept though it has become popular in elite public school going children. So when such situations are shown in our children films majority of our children do not find them absorbing and then they turn to adult films which are full of crimes, violence and sex. If we have to wean them away from the 'dishum dishum' culture of adult films we will have to make children films with absorbing characterisation and credible situations that will enchant them.

CHILDREN NEED HEROES

Dr Ira Saxena

The hero is an ordinary person who can still draw on the source of some emotion, universal in appeal, which infact enables that person to transcend his ordinariness to become an inspired or inspiring figure. Besides creating an identity of the main character, around whom the story evolves, it is essentially a matter of identification where children are concerned. The fact assumes special importance with the ever-so-powerful medium of children's films, because the distance between the screen and audience gradually melts into nothingness, the audience ceases to be a mute observer rather becomes an active participant of the drama, experiencing the moments of elation and depression with the hero. Children need dreams of glory that make hope a reality in ordinary beings, they desire to visualise the cherished virtues of courage, bravery, goodness and victories through their identification figure — the hero.

The hero, really, is like an ego-ideal who stays in their mind as an active guiding force, who generally shapes the child's reactions even with his playmates in a game of football or his considerations towards aging grand-parents at home. Like every other impression in childhood the influence of the hero of a film are not permanent, yet the hero's magic works consciously manifested in his behaviour and sub-consciously on the child's thinking at every stage of his development.

The adequacy of the hero, in the eyes of the viewer, largely depends on the ego-strength of the hero, determined directly by his ability to face stress and emerge victorious at the end. The more adequate the hero, the more appropriate, realistic and happy the outcome. Truely, the hero who steals the heart of child-viewers, bravely encounters all conflicts, confronts unexpected odds, fights the undesirable elements, comes to assist the powerless when required, acquires leadership and finally rises above the rest to achieve the goal but still holds his feet firmly on the ground to remain a real character in flesh and blood. Such heroes satiate the aspirations that children live for. The description fits well into 'superman'. Actually he may not be a 'superman'. Superman is superficial, even the smallest of children know that superman is not real, like a puppet he would go back in its box when the curtain draws at the end of the show. The real character who rides a mobike, jumps onto galloping horses, mounts a speeding train, whose speech is full of wit, bubbling with humour and compassion stays kicking even after the lights turn on.

The main character gains importance in the story by solving important conflict. He must possess an urge, a motivation for acting as he does due to special attributes assigned to him. The essential goodness (a virtue naturally preferred in the case of children} of his nature finds expression in a logical and reasonable performance — the very motive of his actions needs to match the potential of the motive in order to sustain interest upto the end. If the hero's motive is weak the viewer does not care whether he succeeds or fails and the hero topples with the story. Also the hero ought to fit into the shoes of the character convincingly to accurately match the size of the character. Any abberation from the real standards are deemed unnatural by the children who are very quick to notice

minutest absurdities. The hero then loses all credibility] fails to enchant.

The fact raises the question of emotional appeal that certifies that enchantment of the hero needs to be skin-deep in order to cast its spell. Does it really matter if the hero or heroine excel in physical charm? A little, it is an added qualification, predominantly overshadowed by the qualities of the hero. Most universal sentiments th. . strike adults and children alike forever, are love, compassion and tenderness. There are concepts as conscience, bravery, honour, chivalry which call for absolute standards of behaviour to project and preserve these ideals. The hero transcends these capacities to portray human attributes greater than human-beings.

Nothing stirs more than action. A scene of high pitched drama where the hero is heading on a narrow uneasy ledge in his attempt to change the course of the moving ship . . . jumps and lands on top of the villian . . . a bullet whizzes past . . . turns kicks the gun out from the hands of the aggressor into sea . . . another punch on the villian's chin . . . drops flat on the floor somersaults a mid-air kick . . . manages the wheel . . . heroine yells, he glides out to help . . . . Activity is key. It is not difficult to imagine a tight fisted child audience with an apprehensive gleam in the eye as the first tightens further in readiness to punch a blow. Demands of such a drama suggest physical strength. However, attraction towards physical strength of the hero compounds when accompanied with intelligent scheming. The modern child, with his phenomenal intellectual capacity, becomes excited with the race of sharp thinking in the same way. Infact physical strength minus intelligence holds no charm. In a recent children's film — "War Games" — the young hero is able to break into "War Games" programme, as they understand the implication they struggle to search the right code to cease

function of the game which could result into a great disaster. Such mental action with limited physical movement, face to face with computers is equally stirring, the fast thinking process equally thrilling as the sequences of any swift physical action.

Very often such high-strung drama could lead to violence. Violence is not healthy, specially suggestion of violence leaves a very disturbing impact on a child's impressionistic mind. The fact adds to the social responsibility of the hero. Howsoever attractive, well behaved and full of action if his deeds suggest cruelty he ought to be disqualified from children's films.

Infact children still love the classic image of a hero who is brave, saviour of the feeble, warm and caring and fights the evil for a good cause, someone like Robin Hood or even Gandhi as shown in the film "Gandhi". Although it was not a film for children yet the children who saw it adored Gandhi for his courage, righteousness, will and strength of conviction.

Attraction towards goodness is natural, the hero's preoccupation with the struggle between good and evil is forever enduring. And when we wish to preserve these values we need heroes. For instance the epic drama of Ram and Ravana never loses its charm because it imbibes in the story the everlasting values. The heroes, heroines like Ram, Sita, Kaushalya, Urmila, Mandodri, Bharat, Laxman, Jatayu, Bali, Sugriva and the all time favourite of children, the superman Hanuman, remain the classic heroes. The virtues remain while the hero changes its form to suit modern times and scientific thinking, be it a child hero or an adult as a hero in a children's film.

Child's manifold patterns of behaviour undergo such ceaseless, continuous transformation that mental growth

assumes characteristics specific to a particular stage of development, so does the choice of a hero. While a pre-schooler seeks aspects to aid acquisition of his maturational status, the early adolescent happily identifies with the not-so-powerful, unprotected hero, fighting for independence to fit himself in the role of adulthood. At each stage they search for honourable virtues in the character whether it is "Black Beauty" or "Alladin" with his magic lamp. Among the new science fiction heroes Luke Skywalker who challenges the Galactic Empires ultimate weapon — the Death Star, Ben Kenobi bestowed with very special power who can still be a threat to sovereignty of the Empire, Princess Leia a strong willed princess, Chewbecca the monkey faced old giant who helps Luke to fight awesome Darth Vader a personification of evil, all of Star Wars fame, are modern heroes belonging to outer space, but built of same classic stuff and capable of providing in themselves an identification figure whereby the viewer reflects his entire self, social role and image. Such heroes fulfil the child's expectations and stay with them to inspire.

Therefore, the anti-hero cannot be the hero, even though we live in time of the anti-hero. The anti-hero stands in contrast to the hero mainly due to ultimate motive of his acts which is vile and painful. While shaping the villain the writer may use the same force in action like that of a hero, the villain possessing great ability for creating trouble and the hero overcoming each with his bravery and finally defeating the evil. Children exhibit an acute sense of discrimination, the good appeals.

Now when peace is threatened, violence abound, terrorism striking all around and regular events demonstrating degeneration of human values are gnawing

at the very roots of the good in mankind, to reassure children their confidence in goodness in an age of anti-heroes, children need heroes, real heroes.

ENTERTAINMENT IN CHILDREN'S FILMS

Indira Ananthakrishnan

What does a child look for in a film that is made for him? As an intelligent individual, capable of expressing his mind, the child is amazingly clear in his demands. Basically, he looks for a good story line. This, beyond any doubt, is the backbone of a good film. But, in itself, it can be had in any good story book. Therefore, the story is not the be-all and end-all. A film is also judged by the visual and audio impact that it is able to create. Hence, the aforesaid 'backbone' has to be done up with a number of other items to make it attractive on the silver screen. This is where the cooperative effort of several skilled specialists of filmdom comes into play, and this is what gives the overall effect of good entertainment for the viewer.

A number of children, including the child delegates of the IVth International Children's Film Festival of India have expressed their views, from which it can be conclusively said that what they all want, basically, is a good entertainer. So the significance of entertainment in a children's film becomes monumental. If that is what a child looks for in a good film, then it becomes imperative that the film made exclusively for his viewing pleasure must be thoroughly enjoyable and entertaining for him.

What constitutes entertainment? Music? Dance? Humour? Adventure? Fantasy? Animation? Realism? Tear-jerker? A bit of everything?

The last 'bit' sounds interesting; but, in reality, it is rather hollow. The visual impact of it is nothing but a hotch-potch. It is an easy way out, no doubt, and many film makers do resort to it, but the child who is shrewd, intelligent and wise sees through it. He certainly does not want an unrealistic mix-'n-match sort of a variety entertainer. For that he could go to a mela or a fancy fete. For entertainment in a film, he looks to something more concrete, so that the impact is stronger and long-lasting.

Then, is it possible for a film to entertain the child with music and dance? It has not been impossible, as has been proved by several musical films in the past that have stood the test of time and criticism, and have come out unscathed as good entertainers. 'The Sound of Music', 'Mary Poppins', 'Oliver' are some examples with which most of us are familiar. A pertinent question is bound to rise — 'Isn't it true that only those children with a ear for music will find such films entertaining?' The answer is 'No'. Since a film is an audio as well as a visual entertainer, a musical film is more often than not, a universal entertainer.

With the myriads of lyrical folk tunes that our country can boast of, accompanied by rythmical movements of dances, a musical entertainer with childhood appeal should not be too difficult to make. There have been musical ballets in India since days of yore. Ideas taken from them, superimposed by the technicalities of cinematography should make interesting musical entertainers.

Humour is another aspect which has plenty of childhood appeal, and films full of humour are certainly ace entertainers. But here again, a vast amount of study and understanding are called for, in order to realise what exactly is the type of humour that can be appealing and can create an everlasting visual sensation and impression

in the child's mind. Ridiculously funny fools cannot entertain; nor can ludicrous clowning and clownish adventures. These produce smirks, not laughter. Similarly, satire can have no audiovisual impact or entertainment for the child. Mocking at adults or the disabled is again not a healthy kind of humour. What children laugh at heartily are exaggerated and amusing situations, abrupt actions, funny and comical behaviour, mispronounced words and so on. How wonderfully these positive aspects of humour can be projected on the silver screen by a skilled hand! What fun children have with 'Laurel and Hardy' and 'Charlie Chaplin' films! Real good humorous entertainment can never become outdated. They have universal appeal that transcends time. Which adult can sit through a 'Laurel and Hardy' film, glum and gloomy? Our Indian film makers have, no doubt, tried their hand, time and again, at humour. But a large number of such films have not succeeded. Why? It is simply because they have not really tried to project good humour that tickles the senses and provokes thunderous, childlike laughter creating an everlasting impression of amusement, entertainment and enjoyment. Mention must be made here of Satyajit Ray, who has been a past master in the art of entertaining the child with his films, special hilarious ones like 'Gopi Gyne Bagha Byne', which is also a musical. So, with just some thoughtfulness and effort, our film industry can go a long way in amusing and entertaining the child.

Our country is known for fantasy and fairy tales. These are endearing and enduring. Our ancient classics and folklore are interwoven with fantasy, and therefore have a lot of childhood appeal. Fantasy is something that every child enjoys. He, very often, transports himself mentally to a world of fantasy and lived happily there, quite oblivious of his surroundings, till his mother's voice or

his teacher's command drags him back, rudely to reality. For such a mental make-up, wouldn't an audio-visual fantasy be an excellent entertainer? No doubt it will, and film makers all over the world are certainly very much aware of it. Walt Disney, USA's gift to the world has proved it beyond doubt. Also, our vetala stories have made a lot of audio-visual impact on children and so have films like the 'The Wizard of Oz', 'Alice in Wonderland'.

However, by and large, audio-visual entertainment of fantasy has been based on a classic tale of fantasy that has already proved its worth as a reader. So far, so good. But, we should have more and more of such fantasy films appealing to the modern child, and this is where the creative writer of today plays his role. What children want are refreshing themes, and not a formula film, as they call it. The writer's flights of imagination are put to test as he weaves his modern tale of fantasy fitted with childhood appeal. Such a tale, frilled with film techniques would be a wonderful entertainer, indeed! Clubbed with this category are animated films and puppet films. Any time is film time for children so far as animated films go. Children are ever ready to sit, finger on their lips, in front of an animated film. The most widely known, appealing ones are again Walt Disney's cartoons. Animated films need a lot of artistic skill and film finesse, and hence prove costly. But the results are rewarding. The beautifully animated short Indian film, 'Karuna Ki Vijay' (The Triumph of Kindness) is loved by children. It tells the story of young Gautam and Deva Dutta, who quarrel over a bird. Deva Dutta shoots it and wounds it with an arrow. The king, who is asked to settle the case, awards the bird to Gautam, who nurses it back to health and sets it free. The film ends with the child Gautam's face dissolving into the familiar face of the Buddha. The film is an award winner and very popular with children. So

animation films need not always be funny films or cartoons, in order to be a good entertainer.

Another perpetual entertainer is animal story films. They could be animated versions like Panchatantra and Mickey Mouse, or real life stories of dogs and cats, or Adamson's 'Born Free'. Children are close to nature and love animals. Hence they are well entertained by animal films, and are deeply impressed and moved by them.

The somewhat older age group of children are more difficult to entertain. They are on the verge of shedding their childhood and taking a peep into adulthood. They have more specialized tastes. By and large, they too do not want slam-bang films of violence or formula films. They welcome adventure and realism. These children are more down-to-earth, and are therefore entertained by realistic knowledge of the world around them, and are also inspired by a strong spirit of adventure. Here again, our history and classics lend a hand in making such films. But, for realism to play its part, once again, the creative writer has to come up to weave a realistic story full of child like actions and emotions, centred round the day-to-day life of today's child with some punchful problems that get solved as the story moves on to a close. The child enjoys himself in completely identifying himself with the situations in the story, smiling and sulking, loving and loathing, singing and swinging with the characters. Thus, such a film is able to entertain him thoroughly. But, to make such an entertaining film is a difficult and arduous task, right from the base, which is the story line. Every bit of the film has to be thoroughly drawn up, dwelt upon, developed, designed, directed and done from the child's point of view. Such a one was the Golden Elephant best film award winner 'The Moonlit Cottage', at the IVth International Children's Film Festival. The film is about the life of three brothers, with a dog, who, due to family

miseries have unhealthy and twisted attitudes. With good help and care, however, they grow up to be healthy, sensible young men. Tear-jerkers are not a taboo, as has been proved by the popular US film on the life of the young gymnast, Nadia. Such films are haunting and endearing. Science fiction movies should not be left unmentioned. They are enchanting and entertaining for all age groups.

Such films are still in their infancy in India since filming them are time consuming, arduous and expensive. If 'Dhoomketu' proves to be a roaring success, perhaps, more such films will be produced.

There is really no dearth of ideas for punchy and entertaining children's films. Of course, it has to be remembered that with changing times some of these ideas will have to undergo a change, for children today are, in certain respects, different from those of yesterday. As the renowned film maker, Hrishikesh Mukerjee, speaking on behalf of his fraternity, put it, 'If we knew what exactly children would like, we would all have been millionaires!'

What one really needs in practice is some bit of extra effort to do a certain amount of research work, and arm oneself with a basic knowledge of the child and childhood, and what would, more or less, be entertaining for him. Then beginning with the skilled script writer, if the experts of filmdom go about their work with a sense of dedication, single minded devotion, and a directed determination to entertain the child, wouldn't the outcome be a successful entertainer?

THE PROBLEM OF COMMUNICATION IN FILMS FOR CHILDREN

Aruna Vasudev

Growing up in today's world for the average, urban child must be an exciting, stimulating, confusing and disturbing process. A materialistic world full of gadgets, a fascinating array of goods to acquire, and fierce competition that starts with nursery school where children are sent by proud parents when they are still toddlers to prepare for the tough struggle to enter one of the envied, status-*symbol* schools.

The wish-fulfilment world of make-*believe* is soon left behind. Even parents find themselves at a loss as to what kind of world to prepare their children to face. In such a situation, the maker of films for children has to shoulder an even greater responsibility. With an early, and sustained, exposure to television and video where there are few programmes designed specifically for children, there is the uniquitous feature film which invades the consciousness. Today's children acquire a *precocious* understanding of negative emotions like jealousy, hatred, fear and oppression, violence and vengefulness, together with distorted views of relationships between adults. It is far away from the secure, enchanted, "Once upon a time . . . "world of fairy tales. Today's fairy tales revolve around He-man and Spiderman, extra-terrestrials and robots, with a fair measure of violence and wickedness, where the basic morality remains constant. Good always triumphs over evil but the twists and turns

of fortune are more exciting and adventuresome. The victory of virtue fulfils the conscious/subconscious expectations of the child, giving psychological reassurance. The popular *Hindi* film too, has the same reassuring ending but along the way, so much vice and *wickedness* has been shown, often in an attractive light, that a certain amount of confusion is inevitable.

Considering the environment in which today's children grow up, considerable thinking has to go into the kind of film that would *attract* and hold their attention. Wide-spread television is also responsible for erasing rural and urban differences in attitudes and reactions, while advertising on television of consumer goods and luxury foods only helps to widen the gap between affluence and poverty. Whether it is Magginoodles or Thums-Up, He-man or the *Ramayana,* tastes are being created and desires and values shaped by images far more powerful than the teachings of the elders. It is more vital, therefore, that the Children's Film Society launch a programme of production of films that provide a wider perspective for children; films which cut across the so-called rural-urban divide and have nothing to do with the *rich*-poor gap; films that uphold values while providing entertainment that contains elements of excitement and adventure without violence. Cruelty is something that children seem to take in their stride much more easily than adults usually realise. Fairy stories and nursery rhymes are full of instances of cruelty and of wicked characters who suffer a satisfyingly just retribution in the end. But the violence that has become a part of our social and media environment can have frightening consequences.

It has always seemed that Indian adults have great difficulty communicating with children, even their own. Either we talk down to them, adopting a tone that is condescending and patronising to the point of irritation, or

we treat them as miniature adults, assuming that they are able to adopt adult modes of behaviour. In the feature film, children are usually *obnoxiously* precocious or sickeningly sweet. Getting children to act is a highly specialised gift which some of the contemporary theatre directors have successfully developed. But, at the same time, it is not essential that children act in *children's* films; it is quite possible to make films for children with adult characters. However, the portrayal of adults too, in children's films requires careful handling. According to children themselves, in films that they have seen, adults are frequently shown as foolish (foolish + cruel = villain, seems to be the equation) or people who can easily be hoodwinked by ultra-bright kids. This has, naturally an aspirational appeal for children but can lead to an imbalanced view of reality. In the pursuit of humour, situations *depicted* are often bizarre and farcical — another instance of talking down to children, oversimplifying things to make them *comprehensible.* In fact, subtle humour can be just as easily understood if handled right. Walt Disney while making "The Sorcerer's Apprentice", told his staff: " Please avoid slapstick gags in the ordinary sense. Work, instead, towards fantasy and business with an imaginative touch".

Imagination is the key word. One has to be able to enter the child's world as an equal, like Alice entering Wonderland, acting as an observer-participant. Frank Thomas writing about Walt Disney, said "The challenge to the storyman was how to make a rich, colourful, complicated story of great philosophical importance in six or seven happy little sequences with a mixture of awesome fantasy and great *comedy* ."

Films for children can assume different shapes. There is the world of pure fantasy and imagination where mushrooms and flowers turn into dancers, where the

audience is transported into an enchanted world of magical happenings and wishes-come-true; or they can depict the real world with which children can identify. The imagination can perceive the absurd and the fantastic in our normal, everyday surroundings, and the sudden contrast of what is with what can be, has a charm that is irresistible. To achieve this, however, requires skill and imagination and, above all, the desire to be one with the children, to see the world as they see it or would like it to be.

APPROACH TO FILMS FOR CHILDREN

Kamini Kaushal

A species of rodents, residing in the cold regions of the poles, have a behaviour pattern, evolved out of necessity to help nature keep its balance. Every seven years or so, by which time the rodent population has multiplied to bursting point, the entire herd makes an exodus to new areas for accommodation. In the process the rodents tumble over high cliffs and glaciers or into the sea, which becomes their watery grave. Thus they rid themselves of the unwanted excess and are ready again, a mere manageable number, to make a new beginning. Likewise, there was an old Japanese tradition that the very old, however loved, were carried by the eldest son to a remote mountain top, to be starved to death and become feed for vultures, the aim being to reduce the number of mouths to feed with scarce feed. In any case, epidemics solved the over-population problem in the days gone by. Today, progress means preserving life against natural hazards — erstwhile hand-maidens of nature for maintaining ecological balance. Benefits of the Green Revolution, Industrial Development etc. have been nullified in the third world countries, including ours, because of population explosion. Apart from steps to contain population, a bigger problem is to contain the boundless energy of the masses. This force could be a mighty asset if channelised correctly, failing which it will surely become a source of utter chaos and anarchy. We have no time to waste!

When I was young, our magnificent obsession was to rid the country of the foreign yoke. All our energies were geared to the cause. There is no such ideal before the young people of today. So we have to give them motivation. How do we guide and educate them to be assured of a secure and worth-while future? Through schools? Well, the millions of institutions and millions of teachers will have to be mobilised. And the teachers will have to be totally dedicated and well educated — and be prepared to work for a pittance — a fond hope. But there is a solution.

The solution lies in gearing technology to our aid, and through it to enact the miracle of a salvage operation. We have only to see how the advanced countries, especially the socialist ones, have exploited the audio-visual media to the maximum for the education of their people, young or old, rich or poor, urban or rural. It has been demonstrated convincingly that this way it is possible to impart a new set of values to the entire nation. We should do the same, putting across programmes prepared by experts in their fields, to suit our special needs, working out legistics of dividing time between radio, film and television. Programmes should be prepared by experts and cover as wide a range of subjects as necessary — agriculture, sports, engineering, mathematics, science, religion, dramatics, humanities . . . and so on. This is being very successfully done in New York state where all schools are informed beforehand about the coming programmes.

What a child sees and experiences becomes a part of his psyche for ever. The images of childhood incidents are indelible and their impact is lasting and deep. These play a major role in the way people grow up and the way they think. The interest in books and ecology dates back to the time when one was learning to walk.

In the task of making programmes for children there can be many constraints. It is both easy and difficult: easy, because of the enormous curiosity of children, particularly their interest in the world of adults; and difficult because of the vast difference in the levels of motivation in catering to the age groups from 3 to 14 years. Broadly speaking, making kid's programmes, we have two sets of standards: feasibility for a broadcaster and desirability for a child, not an adult. We have to strike a happy medium balancing doses of information with skill, imagination, entertainment, variety, originality *et al.* Looking at the first aspect, we may have to limit ourselves as facilities like animation, special effects and other visual extravaganza are not easily available, and they are costly and time consuming. I made a live action-cum-animation film 'Meri-pari' and can say that these luxuries are not for us. An interesting, inexpensive, yet effective device I found is the simple, unsophisticated puppet!

Audio-visual medium is an excellent back-up to school teaching, enlarging the span of the subject taught and giving it depth; it however, does not replace the teacher, only supplements him.

A child's maximum brain development takes place before the age of five before starting school. Non-formal programmes designed to build character and instil worth-while values, to last a life-time, must be shown to the toddlers in abundance. It is important to be discriminating in the choice of films shown, for one very valid reason, amongst others, being that TV watching puts strain on the child's eyes, which can be very harmful. Needless to add that Hindi commercial cinema by and large gives the child a distorted view of life.

Attending Children's Film Festivals and seminars in Russia, I was happy to learn that their eminent Directors vied for opportunities to direct films for children, which

they considered a challenge! Unfortunately, it is not so in our country, except for a few exceptions viz., Satyajit Ray. It is understandable because they are not commercial propositions. Here the Children's Film Society can play a great role, in getting eminent film personalities involved. How about it being made incumbent on a successful and imaginative director to make a children's film to an approved script! Artists will not lag behind in contributing their mite when called upon. Their counter-parts in countries like the UK do that, and what beautiful children's films are the result! Certain categories suggest themselves to interest children:

Exploration : Children love to explore. They begin with their bodies from the day they are born, turn to ashtrays when they can reach them, to stair and garden paths from the day they can crawl and their neighbourhood no sooner they can walk and run. They enjoy visits to the zoo, factories, sports grounds and new places. Since it is physically impossible to transport them to such places, one can enrich their vision of the world through audio-visual programmes, not unlike a conducted tour. I have thoroughly enjoyed BBC programmes on wild life, beautifully depicting co-existence among humans and animals, and the ingenious ways they overcome hazards in impossible terrains.

Doing : It is surprising how many things can be made out of waste materials about the house. Children can be kept engaged in stimulating activity and taught to use their ingenuity by specially devised programmes. Not all children are good at using their hands but some of these exposed may be encouraged to do so. This could even lead to interesting professions.

Story-telling: A well-told story, especially when accompanied by sound and visual effects will become a

living fantasy for the young viewer. Here again I would draw attention to the great Walt Disney's creations, who proved without an iota of doubt that a children's programme can be equally enjoyed by adults. I enjoy seeing his films over and over again, as much today as I did when I was a child. Fairy and folk tales from all over the world are suitable material.

Orientation : A pre-schooler can benefit maximum from school education. He will learn moral science, identify good from the bad, learn to cross roads, what foods are healthy, and risks he may be exposed to without his mother around to protect him.

Multi-purpose Overlap is the basis of these programmes. *Sesame Street* is an example of an excellent broadcast from U.S.A. A variety of approaches in different formats lets the message be hammered home leaving a never-to-be-forgotten imprint on the child's mind. This format is recommended for the rural viewers who have, by and large, a child's simple mind. An important thing to remember is that all these reflect the child's world, which is seen through his eyes and tackled in his language. Only in this way can interest be held and involvement assured.

Every minute one Indian is added to the world's population. We have no time to lose. The battle ground is there. Let's have the action.

CHILDREN'S FILM MOVEMENT: THE ROLE OF CFSI

Bela Raval

When one talks about the growth and future of a movement such as children's films it is essential to know its existing structure, how it operates and what are its pursuits. Only then one can find out the ground from which it has to blossom.

The Children's Film Society, India (CFSI) is now a thirty-two years old body. Right from its first film made in 1956 to the present times it has survived a series of rough passages. And if one were to observe the progress chart of the CFSI during this time, the curve indicates more of a downward than an upward trend.

It is so because its growth has been most erratic. Both quantitatively and qualitatively the standard of children's films in India has remained at a very low ebb. In its span of thirty-two years CFSI has so far produced only 56 feature films, of which only a few films have shone out from the rest of the floppy ones!

Moreover one should see the growth not only in its linear form but in its totality, that is in terms of its extensity of impact on the audience covered rather than in terms of production or quality alone. How far do these films command their reach and influence? Who comprises their audience? Most often, as it happens, only the city-bred few fortunate children are able to see these special films made for them. What about their counterparts in small towns and villages of India, or even the millions

who live on the pavements or in the slums of the metropolitan centres? Or even to the children in Remand Homes or jails? Do these films ever reach them? Do we ever think of these children? A single mobile van with a 16 mm projector for showing films in rural areas is not enough. How can CFSI cover the maximum population of all the children in the country? Or does it want to cater to only a few of them? These are some of the questions to be dealt with when one talks about growth.

The lay public is even unaware of the existence of the Society itself, let alone the films it makes for children. Very few are conscious of the work done by the Society. The children's films movement has not even touched the fringe of the world of children living in cities or towns, not to speak of the children or adults living in rural areas. Children do not know about the Children's Film Society or the films it has made. For many of them Children's Films mean only cartoon films seen on the T.V. every Sunday morning. That is all!

Who is at fault for such a poor state of communication? Instead of accusing one another or evading the question, the root cause of such a gap of communication has to be located and possible measures have to be taken to eradicate it.

The medium of films is considered the best means of communication of modern times; but if it cannot provide the basic purpose of entertainment to millions of children, how can we think of utilizing its more useful aspects, such as the educational and the informative? Films with these aspects are the ones which contribute to the achievement of desirable educational goals by making an effective use of the motion picture as a medium of communication. And the types of films which could be used successfully are so diverse that no simple production formula could be laid down.

For experimentation, the sky is the limit. But do we experiment enough? If we throw a glance at the thematic value of the films made so far we shall find out that most of them deal with stories of adventure and fantasy, highly influenced as they are by commercial Hindi films. Originality of theme and authenticity of direction are things to be found only very rarely.

What then is the cause for all this? Why has the society not been able to attract committed and creative film-makers to make films for them? In the past also, all those who have tried their hand/in this area, have treated children's films either as a stop-gap arrangement or as a stepping-stone to their career and have abandoned it as soon as they prospered.

Besides such reasons, the lack of adequate funds also has been cited as the primary cause for the dormant state of the Society. For a steady growth, the Society must therefore observe certain norms and see to it that they are practised.

Way back in 1968, a report was made by a study team on the working of the Children's Film Society and the future of the children's film movement. What the team suggested remains equally relevant even today. Listing some of the suggestions made in the report would make the picture clearer:

(i) the government should overcome the limitations by providing adequate financial help to the CFSI;
(ii) in order to make any worthwhile impact, a certain financial provision must be reserved for producing minimum number of films every year. (Failing this, the bulk of the meagre provision made for the work of the Society will be wasted only in keeping the organization going without its being able to do the work entrusted

to it. And this would be a sheer waste of public fund);

(iii) the recommendation of any improvement has to be practicable and flexible enough to carry out a phased programme;

(iv) a wide, satisfactory and adequate system of distribution and exhibition of its films to reach millions of children all over the country be established.

The medium of children's films can be a most important and educative influence on the growing minds of the younger generation in a developing country like ours. It can inculcate in them the positive humanistic values of our culture, assist in the emotional integration of our people, and develop gradually a rational, secular and scientific outlook.

This is not to say that it has actually done any of these things so far, but it is necessary to recognise the potentialities of the medium for the purpose. But if it is to be effective, it would need the sympathetic interest, attention and co-operation of such diverse people as educationists, social workers, active parents and creative film-makers. And of course the full support, financial and otherwise, of the Central and State Governments and other official agencies.

Coming back to the medium, the basic problem is improving the quality of films. Selection of proper stories and themes, which form the very foundation of good children's films, is something which has not been taken into account in any serious manner. Sometime back, the Society had promised to start a Script Bank. This will not only cater to the needs of the Society's own production plans, but will also provide subjects to private producers who may be

interested in the making of children's films on their own.

Along with this, the Society should chart out a long-term planning programme of its own production. It should also arrange previewing of films made by private producers and film-makers in their regions and possibly acquiring them to dub them in Hindi and other languages and exhibit them in the Society's circuit. The Society can also extend its help to private producers providing them with concessions and assistance in their production; and also recommending films which are found suitable for children to be exempted from taxes, etc.

Another important factor which the Society has ignored since long and which should get priority in their list is the need of an adequate library. The Society can hardly boast of good books or periodicals related to children's media in its collection. Hundreds of stories, plays, skits that are written for children in various languages in all parts of the country each year, could be chosen and acquired by the Society. Direct participation of children also could be managed by having short story competitions. And there is no dearth of talent in the country. Some children's magazines are already doing that successfully. These stories are also published in book form. After all we want to show them what they desire. And this is the best way to involve the young minds in this creative media. It will bring in some useful material for children's films and will also help intelligent young people to recall the stories which they might have heard in their childhood, transforming stories which might have helped their personality and character in the most formative years of their life.

Since we are talking about the progress and development of children's films, we should constantly think of children themselves. The whole attempt is to

provide them with good, healthy qualitative films, and surely this cannot be done from an adult's view point only, but by inviting children's opinion as well. We must find out about their choice, their likes and dislikes. Unless the impact of these films is evaluated and a proper study is made of the reactions of the juvenile audience, it may not be possible to ascertain whether or not the purpose for which the films are made has been fulfilled. The Society does not seem to have considered the potentials of such research studies, which, if taken into account, can bring in a regular flow of feed-back. One can thus improve upon a number of aspects of film-making for children. May be after each Children's Film Festival, the children should be encouraged to discuss the merits and demerits of the films they have viewed. Individual interrogations, group discussions, questionnaires concerning the field may be of immense help in this connection.

Children delegates at film Festivals have often expressed a desire to make films on their own. Why can't the Society conduct some short term vacation courses to teach them the basic know-how of the technique? After all we are dealing with this media for them, then why not let them be in? The Society could also introduce one more thing to the young growing minds, and that is a short film-appreciation course to be conducted by its four main offices in the country from time to time and during the festival as well.

During informal talks with children delegates at the Bangalore Festival, Children's Film, the following interesting facts emerged. The children enjoyed most of the films — the attraction of the medium being too strong for them to resist, specially when they were viewing the best entries from the world over. Most of them could easily identify themselves with films from China while they had problem in perceiving or understanding films

from Hungary or Romania. The theme and problem dealt with in those particular films were so very much full of topical and local interest of that particular society or the country they depicted, that they should have been more interesting to the children, but on the contrary created a barrier. Many of them were inquisitive to know the animation process and wanted to learn the art of moving images. There were others who were amused by trick photography in some films. And most of the teenagers were bored to death to see our childish films.

Now all this could be made easily intelligible to them if we could give them an insight into how to appreciate films. We can create an artistically more aware audience in this way. One does not need to understand a film to enjoy it. If the film satisfies one at the entertainment level, well and good, but a film can do many more things besides this to young minds. So why not let it operate on more varied levels?

The success of a film lies in its universality, where the adult and child, the learned or the illiterate, in short everyone can enjoy it. It could be a most interesting feature of progress in this field that while the films are mainly made for children, a majority of them could be equally entertaining to the adults also. This helps the adults in their proper appreciation of the need for special films for children.

And last but not the least aspect is of popularising children's films. If we want more and more children to benefit from this movement in future, we must take measures and plan something concrete to reach the child staying in the remotest corners of the country. One very effective medium for this is T.V. Doordarshan had started showing some of the children's films on alternate Saturday evenings but suddenly this came to an end. Can it not be revived again with more time and space devoted

to this purpose? The Society should gauge the need of the present times and produce some serials for children which can be shown on regular days on television alongwith other adult programmes.

Furthermore, why ignore the possibilities of video cassettes? With the growing need of entertainment, VCR is fast becoming extremely popular in families of various strata. But since the children have nothing apart from Walt Disney cartoons, Charlie Chaplin and Laurel Hardy in the name of children's films, they turn to the popular bait of the Hindi commercials. All understanding parents, educators, film makers and counsellors will disapprove of this onslaught of the commercials but they do not know what to do! There seems to be no other alternative for them to offer. The question then is who is at fault?

Some 56 feature films and 66 short and animation films have been produced by the Children's Film Society so far. Are these films destined only to rust in some archives? The Society itself should turn them into video form in order to popularise them. The Society could possibly start making video films specially for this purpose. The production cost would also come down and this would ensure a wider coverage.

CATCHING THE RAINBOW: TOWARDS GOOD FILMS FOR CHILDREN

Bibhuti Pattanaik

The cinema, as a gift of modern innovatory technology, found a warm reception in India as in many other countries in the world. In the past, it successfully emerged as a unique visual art, capable of arousing curiosity in its spectators. After a while, the silent pictures on the screen started becoming vocal, thus hearlding a new era of motion pictures. The mythological characters, who were larger than life, and could find an easy access to the cinema in the past, were soon replaced by common social beings steeped in their follies and foibles and their achievements and shortcomings.

It was expected that cinema would become a vehicle of artistic and aesthetic pleasure, but it was forced to open up new frontiers to cater to the needs of divergent audience which did not comprise of intellectuals and serious thinkers alone. As a result, it had to assume a commercial role. Cinema is an expensive industry and so the entrepreneurs who invest money are more concerned with its commercial viability. In their profiteering endeavour, the producers are often forced to induct little of art and more of sensationalism into the texture of their production. Consequently the film today stands as a hackneyed set of drab situations, filthy spectacles of sex and violence terminating in whimpers.

According to statistics, India produced 1,268 silent films and 14,938 feature films till 1980. During the last

seven years, a few thousand more films must have been produced. The commercial films out-numbered the art films and critics and serious film-goers monitoring the gradual artistic decline in film production have been registering their resentment. The "New Wave" movement voiced its strong dissent in the past decade and advocated realistic and artistic films. The 'parallel cinema' could show how a low-budget art film can also entertain the general viewers. The 'Super-8' movement proved how the camera could be used against economic and political exploitation. While big-budget and multi-starrer films were made to give unvarnished pleasure and became 'hit' films, films made simultaneously under 'parallel cinema' were creating an awareness of the realities of the life of the common man and were trying to bring their problems closer to the audience. However, there has not been any deliberate or remarkable movement to provide educative and entertaining films for children in India. This is most unfortunate.

Like children's literature, the children's film is rather neglected in our country. The parents are generally opposed to viewing of films by their children, but it is a fact that a large number of children are getting used to visit cinema halls with or without the knowledge of their parents. There they see the commercial film which definitely affects their minds. The grown-ups can distinguish good from the bad and they make a critical appraisal of things presented before them on the screen. The children, however, are usually devoid of this critical outlook and are easily influenced by such films. Unhealthy things they learn from the screen get reflected in the behaviour and life-styles of teenagers in schools and colleges. Nobody argues, of course, that the children will not see films meant for the general public. But should we not give the children an ideal alternative which can wean

them away from the corruptible impact of commercial films?

On the background of this desperate situation, the Children's Film Society, India, which was established in 1955 as an autonomous body has taken certain measure in production, distribution and exhibition of children's film. Besides their own production, the Society has given necessary financial assistance to independent directors for production of children's films. 'Aaj Ka Robin Hood' directed by Tapan Sinha and the Oriya film 'Babula' directed by Sadhu Meher are the results of such endeavour. More such films in other regional languages should be produced and successful films dubbed in other regional languages to resolve the paucity of children's films.

From the psychological point of view, children's films belong to a different genre, in contrast to the films made for the adults. There is a native curiosity in children to know the unkown, whereas the adults try to re-live an experience gone through by their counterparts in real life. The children are the treaders on the purple thresholds of life, they breathe in morning twilight. To them life is something curious, a queer mixture of dream and reality, an enticing rainbow. So they love adventures, fantasies because they are not mature enough to distinguish the real from the unreal or the super-real. A producer of a film for the children should always keep in mind the inner urge of a child. While viewing a film, the child does not keep itself away from the situation depicted on the screen. It gets involved in the film itself and in fact the child becomes a part of the film. An adult sits in the auditorium whereas a child is assimilated into the speckled canvas of the screen.

The children's films, generally, may be of two types — educative and entertaining. An educative film without any

entertainment becomes drab and uninteresting to a child, whereas an entertaining film becomes meaningless without any educative value. The films generating fun and curiosity should also be chiselled in an educative way.

Films, in order to conquer the hearts of children, may make use of stories from epics, legends and myths, and extracts from different literatures with all their regional variations. The lives of great men, including saints and statesmen, may be harnessed. Adventures and tales of super-human characters may also be utilised in the thematic development of the text. Fantasy, besides entertaining a tender mind, expands the horizon of their imagination. "The Adventure of Prince Achmad" by Lotte Reinger, 'Magic Clock' by Starveitch and 'The Thief of Bagdad' by Fairbank are successful experiments in fantasy and their impact upon children has been considerable. The scientific fantasies — from H.G.Wells to Satyajit Ray — have been immensely successful. Films based on such stories can have an unhindered appeal to the child and the adult alike.

Cartoons and animation films also play a major role in arousing the interest of children. It indicates that the mind of a child subtly shudders at the encounter of reality. Right from "Felics the Cat" to "Aesop's Fables", these films have kept the children spell-bound. The popularity of "Mickey Mouse" by Walt Disney could make the directors and producers aware of the potential of cartoon films. Art is imitative. The mimetic theory of Aristotle argues in favour of imitation of action. Hence, the popularity of cartoon among the children.

The producers and directors of children's films should guard themselves against presentation of religious prejudices, hero-worship, perversion, violence, casteism and indoctrination of any set values. They should handle with care the unnecessary digressions in the film. Respect

for emotions of the child should be strictly followed. Let not the child feel belittled in the portrayal of any character, because the child viewing the film undergoes a sea-change in his mind. In his mind the process of identification and assimilation suddenly takes place the moment he is tuned to the action on the screen. A film which does not take into consideration the healthy growth of a child's mind and does not prepare him to breathe in reality during his forthcoming adventure is of little relevance.

As regards production of children's films, let us take the example of one state, Orissa. This State produced nearly 160 films during the past half century. Statistics shows that 83 films were produced between 1934 and 1979 whereas between 1980 and 1986, 79 films were produced. Except 'Babula' by Sadhu Meher, Orissa does not have a second children's film to its credit. There were 117 cinema halls in Orissa in 1979. There are 230 cinema halls now. This indicates that there has been a rapid development both in production and exhibition of films during the past six years. A producer who spends about ten to fifteen lakh rupees for a film, fails to get back his investment as the cinema halls are quite meagre in number. Besides, the owners of cinema houses always show a lukewarm attitude to regional films. Amidst all such constraints it is a Herculean task for a producer to venture into children's films as he is likely to land bankrupt at the end. The same situation perhaps prevails elsewhere in India. The organisers of a pilot project in Maharashtra who have established a mobile film unit for exhibition of children's films in rural areas deserve all credit in this context. Such attempts should also be made in other states for the benefit of children. Children's Film Clubs may be organised in each town and rural block throughout the country as they exist today in Bombay,

Porbandar and Kolhapur. Such clubs should be given wide patronage to enable them to exhibit feature and cartoon films.

Since children's films are not becoming commercially viable, the producers are depending on government patronage to a large extent. But the real growth of children's films rests on the producers and directors who can use their imagination and skill to make films which find patronage from both the young and the old. We have the instance of *Goopi Gyne Bagha Bayen* by Satyajit Ray, which became one of the longest running films in the Bengal film history.

Let us not remain complacent by repeating the verbiage that the children are the future of the nation. Our moral responsibility lies in shaping them while they are still young and amenable and prone to receive the proper mould from us. The audio-visual media of the film can create wonders if properly handled for moulding the children in the right direction. The responsibility lies with us alone. Let our children stretch their hands to catch the mysterious rainbow up in the sky.

WHAT CHANCES OF A CHILDREN'S FILM MOVEMENT?

Swapan Mullick

One of the biggest tragedies of the Indian cinema is the mistaken notion of how children should fit into the total scheme. If it is a film *for* children, it is so far removed from reality as to become, in most cases, pointless. Fantasies and adventures that just about cross the limits need not be so tasteless as they often are. The fact remains that we do not get such enduring and gripping fantasies like *Safed Hathi* and *My Dear Kutichathan*. What comes as entertainment for children generally consists of the most amateurish capers.

That brings us to the most crucial question of what a film *for children* should really be like. Should only children appear in it? Should it be rooted in fantasy? If adults can enjoy it, can it, in the strictest sense of the term, be referred to as a children's film? If no satisfactory answers have been found to these questions, it is because of another tragic reality: out of more than 900 films made in different languages of India round the year, hardly a score — or less — are actually intended for children.

This need not have been so. Our country has a number of talented film-makers, an enormous wealth of fiction specially designed for the young, a rich heritage of myth and folk. But all this does not seem to have inspired our film-makers. If they have to show children, it will have to be in their patronising or pedantic fashion. And that, too in films which flaunt other interests and cater to not

always wholesome taste. The more serious film-makers will turn round and tell you: "What is the point? Is it worth making films for the vaults?"

Yes, they are right. To a large extent. Budgets suddenly become tight when it comes to a children's film. One recalls that even Satyajit Ray's *Goopi Gyne Bagha Bayen,* which later went on to become one of the biggest-ever successes in the Bengali cinema, ran into production difficulties. A film which should ideally have been made in colour (like its sequel ten years later) was made in black and white except for its few concluding scenes. The more serious problem relates to outlets. Are the commercial distributors at all interested in giving children's films the support they need? Do the State Governments do their bit in making sure that school-going and other children get the mental nourishment they deserve through the most powerful medium?

To be fair, it is not as if the State Governments have done nothing. Children's film festivals have been held periodically despite the acute dearth of new films in this category. In West Bengal, the State Government made use of the International Year of the Child to sponsor a whole series of films — mostly short features and docu-dramas — for children.

And yet, can the States boast of a "Young cinema"? In West Bengal, most of the films made on the occasion of the Year of the Child were rather dismal efforts. Some new talents came to the fore to handle themes which would appeal to the young. There were no budgetary problems. Exhibition — albeit on a limited scale — was there; the plea being that the films themselves did not come up to expectations. One of them, *Bhombal Sardar,* got a National Award. But, after seeing the film, one might have felt it was a fluke victory in a year when the output of children's films was particularly bleak.

It has thus been left largely to the veterans to do most of the good work. It must be said, however, that perceptions of healthy nourishment for children have differed among the veterans. Tapan Sinha would rather have pure adventure — whether it is crime on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in *Sabuj Dwiper Raja*, the boy's rapport with the elephant in *Safed Hathi* or the charming portrait of the young genius who sets out to crush tyranny in *Aaj Ka Robin Hood*. For Satyajit Ray, "the best of children's films should also be suitable for adults like the best of children's fiction. Take *Alice in Wonderland* -- you read meanings into it as you grow older. That is what a film should have. A child should be able to understand and enjoy it but it should exist at other levels also. Three ingredients are important — a clear plot line, characters children can identify with, and an element of wish-fulfilment." Ray's basic principles for children's films were closely followed in *Sonar Kella, Goopy Gyne Bagha Bayen* and *Hirak Rajar Deshey*. The first of these had a child as the central character but the other two clearly moved in an adult world but appealed to children with their simple messages. Examined more closely, the *Goopy-Bagha* adventures threw up many exciting and complex ideas, not to speak of the original and exciting craftsmanship, especially in *Goopy Gyne Bagha Bayen*. But it is not as if Ray could not make effective use of child actors. What better example could we have than *Pather Panchali* with Apu becoming the pivot of the unforgettable odyssey? If children could derive a special thrill from the depiction of real children, the undertones impressed upon the adult mind so greatly that it became a veritable text-book for all future film-makers. At the other extreme was *Pikoo*. The child in it figured in what was clearly an adult theme.

But the point is that it is truly difficult to find real

children in the Indian cinema. To some extent, the regional cinema offers better chances and has sometimes come out with sensitive depiction of child characters. Who can forget the young lad in Aribam Syam Sharma's *Imagi Ningthem* or the absconding youngster in Ritwik Ghatak's *Bari Thekey Paliye?* Ghatak's film was one of the finest of its kind and brought out the quality of childhood one tends to forget as the boy comes up against the harshness of a teeming city. To some extent, *Bari Thekey Paliye* was reminiscent of Khwaja Ahmed Abbas's *Munna* in which a lost child sets out in search of his mother. He has to pit his ready wit against a cruel world and encounters all kind of experiences. Each experience is a reflection of the adult world as well as a contribution to the boy's mental development.

There are a few lapses into preconsciousness (that bane of every "filmy" child). But it is reasonably plausible and far superior to even Abbas's earlier work *Hamara Ghar*. This film is about a group of ship-wrecked children who have to contend with the elements and their own shortcomings. It is interesting thematically but the execution fails well below Abbas's best. It was so patently false that even children failed to react to it positively.

That brings us to all those Hindi films which may as well start with adulthood but choose to start with childhood instead. The "young" hero deliver their lines in self-conscious accents and weep a lot. The idea is that tragedy is doubly tragic when children are involved. The inclusion of the child reinforces the pathos. Since the children are synonymous with innocence (*Masoom* for instance), their appeal generally persuades the erring hero to return to the rails.

Alternately, children exist in the cinema to bring out the best in the adults who surround them. This becomes a good excuse for giving lengthy advice and engaging in

vicarious harangues. The familiar impression of tiresome mischief colours their behaviour even as they go about doing things like acting as a foil to the romantic peccadilloes of their elders. Rather than indulge in all these painful excesses, why not develop the new technology of animation? Or try to make the young think through serio-comic fairytales? These are two possibilities in what could truly be a rewarding children's film movement.

CHILDREN ARE BORN AUTOCRATS

Satyen Bose

I have been branded a 'Child Director' even though I have made many films with no juvenile stars. But, I do not resent the tag. Making films with children is an adventure into the unknown. Children are unpredictable. What's more, children are not actors. The dialogue and actions have to be improvised according to the impulses of the child. I have known from experience that a child hardly ever repeats the same action or dialogue twice. So the director has got to be alert and take the cue from the child and shoot when he honours the script. It's a game of patience. Believe me, its an exciting game. I love it.

A director who has a juvenile artist as his star is literally a slave of the child. He has to wait indefinitely till the child's whims synchronise with the demands of the script. He is a lucky director who can get even fifty per cent of what he wants from a child in accordance with the script. Children have scant respect for the script writers who conjecture what a child would do in a particular situation. Let us be very frank. No two children are alike and not even a Cheiro can predict the pattern of their behaviour.

Besides, children are born autocrats. One has to honour whatever that catches their fancy. No amount of cajoling or coaxing can make them change their mind.

The director who has chosen a child as the pivotal character in a film has to be a great 'inventor'. Because

he has to keep on improvising while retaining the dramatic compactness of the film. It is indeed a difficult task. But then there is no way out.

I have been singularly lucky in as much as I had not much trouble in directing children. Maybe it is because I was a child much misunderstood by my parents and I have spent a lifetime trying to understand why my parents could not understand me.

It is not that the children just respond slavishly to my instructions. I am no pied piper who can claim a procession of child artistes behind me. Far from it. There were times when I have thrown up my hands in despair while directing children on the sets. But then in the end I have always got what I wanted from the child. It is just a question of patience. It is indeed a 'long wait' to get what you want from a child.

More than anything else what a child craves for most is affection. Children's interest in inducements like toys, pets and sweets is just momentary. What really lasts is the bondage between the director and the child artiste. In fact the director has got to be the father, mother and the playmate to the child artiste before he can put him through the paces.

The director who takes a child artiste is the world's greatest gambler. Because children grow up fast. Imagine a film where the climactic sequences of the child have been shot this year and the early portions for some reasons or the other have to be shot next year. How ridiculous it would appear. Believe me, it has happened in the case of some pictures with disastrous results.

The most important factor in making films with children is that the writer and director must have a thorough study of child psychology. It does not, of course, mean mugging up volumes of theoretical discourses on the subject. One who hasn't known and loved children

intimately should never attempt to portray them. This is it. The main drawback of most of the writers and directors is that they present the children as worldly wise, delivering long sermons, the significance of which even their parents would find difficult to grasp.

Summing up, the best script writer in the world for a film on a child is the child himself. Similarly the best 'child director' is one who slavishly follows the dictates of the child. These remarks of mine may sound strange, but believe me, they are true.

WHY I DO NOT MAKE FILMS FOR CHILDREN

Buddhadeb Dasgupta

My nine-year-old daughter often asks me as to why I do not make films for children — which they would be able to understand and enjoy. She finds my films too serious, grim, not at all enjoyable or entertaining. I keep mum, as I do not have any answer to these queries. Also, I do not really know, if I would ever be able to make a children's film.

I must confess here that I have never felt inspired to make a children's film, because I do not intend to tread the conventional path of film-making for children, generally followed in India. In our country, the films usually made for children, are often based on hackneyed themes. They are very badly made and, instead of developing a healthy attitude in children, become tools for cultural subversion. In fact, they only pollute the minds of the children and stifle their imagination.

These confessions do not, however, mean that I am indifferent to the child's world of dreams and fantasies. Very often the world of their dreams and fantasies haunt me, excite me. But then, I feel that the children's world need not necessarily be overblown with one-sided emphasis on their "innocence" or be filled with suspense and mystery. In fact, a child's world is much more complex than we think it to be. This is more so in India, where more than fifty per cent of children do not have any childhood. In 1986 I visited Ferozabad, a small town in

Uttar Pradesh, to shoot a documentary film on glass, which I was then making. There, at Ferozabad, I met Shib Lal, a tender aged boy of twelve. Shib Lal was a child labourer in a glass factory, which made trinklets and other decorative wares made of glass. His face was grim, sullen — almost like that of an aged person. This struck me. Shib Lal once told me that he had got married not long ago and that he would like to become a father soon, since he had heard that those who worked in the glass industry of Ferozabad did not live long. And so, he wanted that his child should come to this world rather soon because only then he would get the time to bring him up. He dreamt of a future, free from exploitation and hunger. This incident reminded me of the characters of two children of my feature film *Neem Annapurna* (Bitter Morsel). Their only dream was to get a full rice meal after days of near starvation condition.

These lead me to a question. For which category of children should I make the "children's film"? For the children of the well-fed, affluent class? Or, children like Shib Lal? Can the imaginations, aspirations and fantasies of these two groups of children converge? I often ponder over these questions. Maybe one day I'll find a satisfactory answer to these questions. My confusions and doubts will clear up and I would eventually get ready for making a "real-life children's film".

REPORT
on the Seminar on
FILMS FOR CHILDREN: GROWTH & FUTURE

On the occasion of the 5th International Children's Film Festival held at Bhubaneswar, this Seminar was held at Raj Bhavan, Bhubaneswar on Sunday, the 15th November, 1987 at 10.30 A.M. Sri B.N. Pande, Governor, Orissa presided over the Seminar, Dr J.P. Das acted as moderator during the deliberations. A list of participants of the Seminar is enclosed.

To organise the Seminar, a Seminar Committee had been formed (the list of Members of the Committee has been given earlier in the book). The Committee had several sittings in which the subject matter of the Seminar was selected and requests were made for contributing papers. Papers so received were circulated among the participants of the Seminar well before the date of the Seminar (and form the contents of this book).

The Seminar was attended, among others, by child delegates from different parts of India to the Festival, jury members, foreign delegates, journalists, writers and film personalities.

At the outset, Dr J.P. Das welcomed the participants and explained the purpose of the Seminar. He drew the attention of the participants to some of the issues which had been raised in the Seminar papers. In his introductory remarks, the Governor Sri Pande expressed concern over the paucity of children's films and hoped that

adequate steps would be taken to improve the situation prevailing in the field of quality and quantity of Children's Films.

Dr J. Mohanty in his paper "Educational Values of Children's Films" observed that educational films are one of the communication media which have great versatility with combination of sound, movement, colour and music. They are capable of bringing the "World into Class-rooms" and provide better education for children who have uneven intellectual abilities. Children's films must be specially made to provide healthy entertainment and to help improvement of a child's mind and personality. They should be aesthetically pleasant and artistically attractive. They should fulfil different psychological needs and conditions and should be suitable to different age-groups.

Ms Aruna Vasudev while presenting her paper expressed anxiety over the current phenomenon that because of exposure to excessively harsh films as well as exposure to the harsh realities of life, children are acquiring a precocious understanding of negative emotions such as violence, hatred, failure and so on. In a film where there is a lot of violence, even when at the end good takes over evil, children are still confused by the extent of violence, and fail to grasp the message, if any. Similarly, many children's films show adults as fools and being facile enough to be hoodwinked by bright kids, and this creates confusion in the mind of the child who has, and who has learnt to have, a different perception of the adult. A lot of sermonisation asking the children what to do and what not to do would also be wrong because a child would not be much of a child without dreams.

Mr Swapan Mullick presented some of his observations on children's films in the present context. Often what is presented as an entertainment to the children is nothing

but a presentation of the most amateur escapades. It is unfortunate that whenever films for children are produced, constraints of budget become extremely obstructive and conspicuous. He also drew attention to some of the remarks made by Mr Budhadev Dasgupta in a paper whereinDasgupta had stated the reasons of his inability to make a film for children. In summing, Mr Mullick pointed out that a children's film must have the characteristics of *(i)* clear and unambiguous plot *(ii)* right characters and *(iii)* an element of wishfulfilling.

Ms Bela Raval observed that earlier producers of children's films have treated production of children's films as a stepping stone for furthering their careers in making adult films, and have not taken production of children's films as anything more than this. This has resulted in mediocrity. She also drew the attention of the CFSI to the urgency of having a script bank as was promised in the last festival. It is important to obtain feedback from the children who have viewed the films for information of film makers. To have a basic appreciation of foreign films it is necessary to understand life in the foreign countries and this can be achieved through training in film appreciation. Children's films could and ought to be popularised through V.C.R. and T.V.

Mr Bibhuti Patnaik pointed out the importance of films for children and the paucity of such films in India.He said that no deliberate attempt has been made so far to provide educative and entertaining films for children. Like children's literature, children's film is rather neglected in our country. He hoped that the Children's Films Society, India, would take steps for producing successful films in different languages. The audio-visual media of the film can create wonders if properly handled for moulding children in the right direction.

Mr Satyen Bose observed that making films for

children is an adventure into the unknown. Children are unpredictable and they have to be studied and represented properly in films. Narrating his experience as Director, he said that a director who has a juvenile artist as his star is literally a slave of the child. He has to wait for the child's whims and fancies. According to him, children are born autocrats and one has to catch their fancy for producing films.

Mr Kidar Sharma observed that he would like to learn from the child delegates about their reactions and expressed his incompetence to give any advice either on the subject of children's film-making or to the children.

Mr N Mohapatra pointed out that he is still in quest of a right definition of children's film. Adults have arrogated to themselves the prerogative of deciding the content and style of children's films and this is questionable. Some of the issues raised by Mr Mohapatra were as to whether it would be obligatory that children's films should have a message or would it be necessary to have an allegory and a fairy tale as the medium. The difficulty in making a film that would attract or engage the interest of children of all age-groups was also highlighted. Animation, Magic and Miracle were pointed out as important techniques of children's film-making.

Ms Beate Hanspach observed that in their country too the number of children's films was as low as twenty per cent of the total films produced. As a film-maker, she was of the opinion that a good children's film would also be a good adult film.

Ms Renate Svardal, Chairperson of National Centre of Films for Children, Norway, also described the state of affairs in her country as more or less similar to anywhere else. Production of children films was low because this earns less prestige than production of adult films. She expressed the belief that if production of children's

films could be made more prestigious, more and more producers would come forward to make such films. Another way of making more films available for children would be to reduce the commercialisation of commercial films and thereby make them more suitable for children.

Mr Sadhu Meher invited attention to the fact that diminutive physical features of children should not be equated with their mental growth. In fact, children are more intelligent than adults on many counts. Children grow up rapidly and, therefore, while making children's films, the films have to be specified for different age-groups. While being concerned about the fewness of children's films, he was more concerned with the quality of such films. It is absolutely wrong to make children's films with low budget because many of the film techniques essential for a children's film are expensive. The practice of some of the failed adult film-makers who try to make a career through production of children's films is not the current approach. Renowned and experienced Directors should, on their own, come forward for making children's films.

Mr N Lakshminarayan observed that it is difficult to define children's films. Children like to view a film with their parents and again a good film for the child is also a good film for adults. As such, children should view such films with their parents.

Mr Byomakesh Tripathy pointed out that the essential aspects of a good film have to be determined against an acute understanding of the mind of the child and, therefore, a film maker should be conversant with child psychology. Some of the requirements of a children's film like simplicity, absence of negative emotions etc. are too obvious to be stated. CFSI should extend its activity. Government of India should allot

adequate funds for production of children's films and a branch of the Children's Film Society, India, should be set up in each State.

Mr Sampad Mohapatra remarked that many of the adult films are merely children's films and with a little motivation, the producers of adult films would come forward to make children's films. The CFSI should not attempt to produce many children's films, but should act as a catalyst in the existing film industry so as to induce more and more producers of Adult Films to switch over to children's films. CFSI should accentuate efforts on *(i)* Import of foreign films *(ii)* Distribution of films *(iii)* Building film theatres for children.

Ms Yu Lan observed that she had participated in a Children's Film Festival held in Moscow and had noticed that the artistic quality of children's films had increased and sometimes has beaten that of the adult films. She had seen the Indian Film "Aaj Ka Robinhood", and had been immensely impressed. Children's films made in China are good but not as good as they would like them to be. Like the situation in other countries, China also has a problem of distribution in children's films. In order to improve the distribution as well as the quality of films, they are going to invite public opinion and also ask the film directors and writers to go into the question of children's films. This would improve the situation.

Ms Nela Tomid noted that in their country also the number of films produced for children is low like in other countries.

Mohammad Tariq Siddique regretted that there has been a deterioration in the quality of films being produced. It is important to understand the mind of children. Children should be consulted before a script for a children's film is finalised. Some of these films, are indeed very good and appeal tremendously. All film theatres should be required

to exhibit a minimum number of shows of children's films. The rural as well as the regional culture and also the heritage of India should get adequate representation in children's films. He emphasised the need for production of films conveying the message of national integration.

S. Mukherjee said that true child culture should be presented in films and more scientific films should be produced in order to enable children to learn more about the modern age of science and technology.

R. Ganesh Sharma Tyagali emphasized the need for bringing out the creativity of children through films instead of trying to sermonize. Teaching of values through presentation of conflict between good values and bad values should also be avoided because this can cause confusion in the mind of the child, who has not learnt adequately to differentiate between the good and the bad. Particularly this is important for the films made for age group upto thirteen. Beyond the age of thirteen, films containing adventure and exploration may form the mainstay. All children's films should contain exposure to nature as all children love nature. Children's films should also constitute a part of education and exhibition of children's films should constitute part of the curriculum.

N.S. Sandhu also emphasised the need for films having message of national integration.

Dani Salu brought out the necessity of producing films depicting lives of tribal children, and that of children who live in remote areas in the jungles and in the rural areas. The life of a child in these areas is very different from the urban lives or that in the plains, and, therefore, a film having such a content would be both new and exciting.

Rajendra Gupta wanted historical characters to be presented in childrens films and more importance to be

given to entertainment.

Prashant Bhatt said that the age group of 11-13 is very significant. The children are neither innocent as stated by Mr Kidar Sharma nor autocrats as observed by Mr Satyen Bose. He brought attention to the fact that some time back when Doordarshan was telecasting adult films and parents were too tired to find out what was going on on the T. V., most of the children had watched such adult films. Because the children now have a lot of homework to do, they will not like to view a film which is not entertaining, and, therefore, all children's films must have entertainment as the essence. At least one children's film should be telecast by Doordarshan each week.

Bharti Thakur said that children are compelled to view adult films because of paucity of children's films. A film would be enjoyable to a child if, in the end, evil is punished and right moral values win. Every child has a latent talent and must be given scope to develop and express the same.

Dr A.S. Das stated that the ability of children to appreciate and understand abstract concepts develops only after the age of eleven. Therefore, films containing abstract elements can be enjoyed only by children above the age of eleven. The correct way to have children's films for different age groups would be to categorise the same for the age groups of 3 to 7, 7 to 11 and 11 and above. A child is not a miniature adult.

In summing up Dr J.P. Das said that the issues such as what constitutes a child or a children's film, or whether there should be different types of films for different age groups are being discussed over and over again and would surely be raised again. One of the concrete suggestions, raised by the seminar and which would be useful to film makers as well as DCSFI is that children should be associated in film making right from the stage at which

the script is prepared. He thanked the participants and thanked the Hon'ble Governor of Orissa for making it convenient to preside over the meeting.

Shri B.N. Pande, Governor in his concluding remarks said that he was very happy to listen to the deliberations. He emphasized the need for incorporation of the message of national integration in films made for children. Eventually, the films must graduate to the concept of international integration. He observed that ancient sages had visualised the world as one though composed of many a religion, caste, language and so on. Despite so much diversity we have to accept our country, as one, where we are all brothers and sisters. He narrated an anecdote where five small children willingly sacrificed their lives during the struggle for independence at the time of the freedom movement in India. The tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is not only that of Hiroshima and Nagasaki but is a tragedy of the entire world and of humanity. Film, T.V. and theatre are powerful media and must be used to inculcate values of humanity and brotherhood. He hoped that the very valuable suggestions made by the participants would be taken note of and be discussed by various media and at various forums so that we can produce suitable films for the future citizens.

The seminar concluded with a vote of thanks by Mr T.S. Narasimhan.

PARTICIPANTS

B.N. Pande	Governor, Orissa
Dr J.P. Das	CFSI
Kidar Sharma	Film Maker
Someshwar Mukherjee	Child Delegate, West Bengal
Subarna Das	Child Delegate, Orissa
Shivani Verma	Child Delegate, Bihar
Bharti Thakur	Child Delegate, Orissa
Mohammad Tariq Siddique	Child Delegate, Madhya Pradesh
Byomakesh Tripathy	Actor
Dr Jagannath Mohanty	Educationist
Hrusikesh Panda	Writer
Bibhuti Pattanaik	Writer
N. Lakshminarayan	Film Director
V.N. Subba Rao	Journalist
R. Ganesh Sharma Tyagali	Child Delegate, Karnataka
Navneet Singh Sandhu	Child Delegate, Orissa
Dani Salu	Child Delegate, Arunachal Pradesh
Rajendra Gupta	Child Delegate, Uttar Pradesh
Dibyendu Rajguru	Child Delegate, Orissa
Prashant M. Bhatt	Child Actor

Khalid Mohamed	Journalist
Swapan Mullick	Journalist
Biranchi Upadhyaya	Journalist
Ashoke K. Mitra	Journalist
Sarat Chandra	Journalist
Dr Jitendra Narayan Patnaik	Journalist
Sadhu Meher	Film Director
Bela Raval	Research Scholar
Satyen Bose	Jury Chairman (India)
Beate Hanspach	Jury Member (GDR)
Yu Lan	Jury Member (China)
Nela Tomid	Jury Member (Yugoslavia)
Kwami Mambu Zinga	Jury Member (Zaire)
Nirad Mohapatra	Jury Member (India)
Parvati Menon	CFSI
Aslak Svardal	Journalist
Ida Zervneith	Denmark
Jorgen Hinseh	Denmark
Manmohan Khetarpal	French Interpreter
Song Yuwu	Chinese Interpreter
S.M. Mishra	Film Producer
B.K. Mohapatra	Film Producer
Nagesh Rao	Journalist
S. Bhattacharjee	Journalist
Ajit Kumar Mohanty	Journalist
Pradosh Patnaik	Journalist
Renate Svardal	Norway
Elisabeth Lysandh	Sweden
Sakuntala Panda	Writer
Hector Hapugoda	Sri Lanka
Sampad Mohapatra	Journalist
Sunit Bhattacharyya	Educationist
T.S. Narasimhan	CFSI

Bijoy Misra	Writer
Ajit Das	Film Actor
Sabita Mohanty	Educationist
Aruna Vasudev	Journalist
Bernd Neuburger	Austria
Sabarni Das	Journalist
Subarna Ghosh	Journalist
B.A. Arasukumar	Film Industry
Biplab Roy Chowdhury	Film Director
Parbati Ghose	Film Director
Paresh Das	Journalist
K. Ravi	Journalist
S.S. Nayak	Television
Dr A.S. Das	Child Psychologist